United Nations A/C.2/62/SR.19

General Assembly
Sixty-second session
Official Records

Distr.: General
28 November 2007
Original: English

Second Committee

Summary record of the 19th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Wednesday, 31 October 2007, at 3 p.m.

Chairperson: Ms. Lintonen ..... (Finland)

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07-57282 (E)

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Agenda item 56: Globalization and interdependence

(a) Globalization and interdependence

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The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda item 54: Sustainable development (*continued*) (A/62/343, A/62/356, A/62/486, A/C.2/62/2 and A/C.2/62/L.5)

(a) Implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (*continued*) (A/62/262 and A/62/376)

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(e) Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa (*continued*) (A/62/276; A/C.2/62/7)

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(g) Report of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme on its twenty-fourth session (*continued*) (A/62/25 (Supp. No. 5))

(h) Sustainable mountain development (*continued*) (A/62/292)

(i) Promotion of new and renewable sources of energy (*continued*) (A/62/208; A/C.2/62/8)

1. **Mr. Clough** (United Nations Industrial Development Organization) noted that the industrial sector currently accounted for around one third of global primary energy consumption and the related carbon dioxide emissions. Industry's energy use and carbon emissions were both projected to grow by around 2 per cent a year over the next two decades, making it vital to tackle vigorously the way energy was used in industry.

2. Climate change solutions must be found that reduced emissions, while supporting economic growth and employment opportunities. While it was true that there was no instant solution, significantly improving industrial energy efficiency was one area where those objectives were fully compatible. More efficient components might bring about energy efficiency gains in the range of 2 to 5 per cent, but measures to optimize entire systems could achieve efficiency gains of 20 to 30 per cent. UNIDO was working to promote the adoption of national and international energy management standards that would facilitate the achievement of that level of improvement, and to build the capacity to comply with such standards in a way that supported core industry values of cost reduction, increased productivity and global competitiveness.

3. There were those who focused on the potential negative impacts of biofuels, in particular the possible conflict between growing crops for food or for fuel. There were also those who saw only the positive impacts, whether reductions in carbon emissions or increased energy security for oil-importing countries. Understanding both of those viewpoints, UNIDO saw its role as helping to define how bioenergy could be utilized in a sustainable way. Although the lack of reliable and affordable energy was widely seen as one of the main barriers to rural development, many poor people in rural areas were unlikely to be connected to the electricity grid in the near future. Consequently, and given the frequently high cost of bringing fossil fuels to remote communities, UNIDO promoted the use of renewable energy sources (solar, biomass and hydro power) to power mini-grids.

4. Many small island developing States depended almost exclusively on imported fossil fuels and therefore had retail electricity prices among the highest in the world. UNIDO helped them move to a more sustainable energy paradigm by developing renewable energy and more efficient energy sources. UNIDO was fully committed to working with all the members of UN-Energy, which had been established to ensure coherence in the United Nations system's multidisciplinary response to the World Summit on Sustainable Development in the field of energy.

5. **Mr. Loayza Barea** (Bolivia) noted that, since decisions taken in one country might affect the

ecological balance of others, environmental problems did not stop at frontiers but impacted the destiny and interests of all. Any solutions proposed on climate change must be in strict harmony with nature.

6. Education was essential at all levels as the principal tool to raise people's consciousness, with a view to promoting a change in consumption patterns. The organization, coherence and institutional capacity of a new model of education needed to have a basis in community action.

7. The objective of such a model was to bring about an understanding of the complex relationship of the environment and the effects of human action. That would make it possible for mankind to acquire knowledge, values and behaviours that would preserve the quality of the environment and at the same time to solve the problems that it was already confronting and that would inevitably arise in the future.

8. The current model of development based on unlimited economic growth was unviable and incompatible with the sustainability of the planet. Bolivia had therefore decided to take from the earth only what it needed, so as to guarantee support for the present and for future generations.

9. The vulnerable developing countries faced additional limitations such as poor quality of life and lack of basic services, so that the limited resources available to them had to be used essentially to combat poverty, malnutrition, disease, illiteracy and unemployment.

10. The shared commitment clearly expressed in the High-level Event on Climate Change imposed a duty to take the right decisions. The necessary financial resources should be provided principally by the developed countries on the basis of their greater responsibility for the world's environmental degradation. There should be a change-over to clean, efficient and renewable technologies in order to support the policies pursued by the developing countries. In that context, the outcome of the Bali Climate Change Conference in December must not be a road map or a wish list but a clear mandate to promote the urgent implementation of the Kyoto Protocol.

11. The shared initiatives on climate change would have to be closely aligned with the policies that had been defined with regard to disaster prevention, so as to assist in overcoming natural disasters by means of comprehensive solutions, as well as the appropriate use of modern and traditional technologies to guarantee food production and security in the face of realities such as crop displacement, productivity losses, the possible appearance of new pests, and so on.

12. **Ms. Halperin** (Israel) said that, while sustainable development was of fundamental importance for achieving the Millennium Development Goals, developing countries faced various obstacles in their efforts to increase agricultural productivity, reduce rural poverty, and combat drought and desertification.

13. The recent report of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) showed that growth coming from the agriculture sector contributed to eradicating poverty twice as much as growth from elsewhere. Consequently, agricultural research and technological improvements were crucial to increasing agricultural productivity and returns to farmers, which would reduce poverty and meet future food needs at reasonable prices without irreversible degradation of natural resources. Agricultural growth required not only research and technology but also appropriate national policies. Israel was committed to sharing with developing countries its experience in strengthening agricultural productivity and advancing agricultural technologies and capacity-building programmes.

14. Promoting small-scale enterprise was another means of eradicating poverty. In that connection, Israel underscored the importance of women's empowerment, since women accounted for 70 per cent of the 1.4 million people living in poverty. Israel promoted sustainable development in self-employed entrepreneurial capacities through MASHAV, its Centre for International Cooperation.

15. The Convention to Combat Desertification could provide a reminder that environment and development were not in conflict; rather, it was the healthy, functional environment that sustained development. Desertification represented a severe impairment of the provision of ecosystem services in the drylands, a result of development that compromised the long-term environmental benefits for short-term gains. At the same time, environmental ecosystem services were underpinned by biodiversity, and conservation of the dryland unique biodiversity was therefore critical for attaining sustainable development of drylands.

16. Israel's long-standing policy to combat desertification included extensive tree planting in

semi-arid zones, cultivation of desert regions, strict limits on grazing and an aggressive national water management programme. Israel had recently started a number of initiatives to share the benefits of its experience. In November 2006, the first United Nations conference in the State of Israel had been held on Deserts and Desertification: Challenges and Opportunities, which would be followed by similar events.

17. Achieving sustainable development in drylands would also reduce vulnerability to climate change. Israel was committed to reducing greenhouse gas emissions on a voluntary basis. The recent events and initiatives at United Nations Headquarters had provided excellent opportunities to discuss some of the many shared global challenges. Similarly, the deliberations of the Second Committee should lay the groundwork for the negotiations on a post-Kyoto arrangement after 2012. Harnessing the political will of all stakeholders in a multilateral process remained the best way to collectively plan the next steps in the global response to climate change.

18. **Mr. Kakar** (Permanent Observer for the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN)) expressed concern that biodiversity was being lost at unprecedented rates, the majority of the planet's essential ecosystem services were degraded and unsustainably managed, and levels of carbon dioxide continued to increase with serious impacts on the world's climate. The need to achieve sustainable development by linking its environmental, economic and social pillars was more acute than ever before. The Union urged the General Assembly to call for decisive action in the implementation of sustainable development commitments, through resource mobilization, capacity-building and integration of environmental sustainability in development strategies and policies. Welcoming the level of attention given by the international community in recent months to the serious threat of climate change, including the thematic debate held by the General Assembly and the High-level Event convened by the Secretary-General, IUCN applauded the resultant emphasis on the linkages between climate change and the ability of countries to meet the Millennium Development Goals. It hoped that the political momentum created would evolve into the needed action at the forthcoming Climate Change Conference in Bali. It urged Parties to agree on a mandate to negotiate a comprehensive post-2012 framework by 2009. IUCN also stressed the need for due consideration of the links between climate change and biodiversity, especially the potential effects of climate change response strategies on biodiversity.

19. IUCN was concerned at the failure to reach a consensus text on energy at the fifteenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development. While the current energy mix was contributing to biodiversity loss and ecosystem degradation, society was at the brink of a significant change in energy production and consumption patterns, which would create openings for new technologies and other innovations. It was important to ensure that the latter resulted in energy systems that were environmentally sound, economically viable and socially equitable. Certain processes associated with biofuel production, particularly those involving deforestation or land conversion, could result in increased greenhouse gas emissions as well as in severe consequences for biodiversity. Robust standards and criteria for alternative fuels were therefore needed, taking full account of the range of environmental and social impacts associated with their full life cycle.

20. Increased local, national and international efforts would be needed to achieve the energy elements of the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development. IUCN urged Governments to ensure that the Commission on Sustainable Development contributed at its full potential at its sixteenth session in 2008.

21. IUCN welcomed the adoption of the 10-year strategic plan and framework to enhance the implementation of the Convention to Combat Desertification, as well as the recognition of the links among climate change, desertification and human well-being. IUCN also welcomed the progress in implementing the decisions taken in 2006 by the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, as well as the progress towards an international regime on access and benefit-sharing. As the latter was critical to the achievement of greater sustainability and equity in the use of biodiversity, IUCN urged the Parties to conclude the negotiations at the earliest possible time, and before 2010.

22. IUCN stressed the need to make progress on the international environmental governance agenda, especially in the context of the General Assembly's consultation process on the institutional framework of

the environmental activities of the United Nations system and its consideration of the recommendations made by the Secretary-General's High-level Panel on System-wide Coherence. It stressed the need to strengthen UNEP as the environmental pillar of the United Nations system; to enhance implementation at national level through stronger collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP); to promote coordination among multilateral environmental agreements; and to make sustainable development a key element of the overarching framework for United Nations activities, as decided in General Assembly resolution 57/253.

23. **Mr. Buffa** (Paraguay) said that his delegation attached major importance to the reference to energy for sustainable development in the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development. Paraguay, a landlocked developing country that was highly dependent on imports of fossil fuels to transport its products to international markets, was considering an increase in its domestic production of fuels of vegetable origin, which would make it possible gradually to reduce its dependence on oil and its by-products and at the same time to save foreign currency that could be used to finance the country's development, particularly in agriculture.

24. Paraguay had a national biofuel programme, the aim of which was to create jobs in rural areas and provide renewable sources of fuels as an alternative to oil-based fuels, which were becoming increasingly expensive.

25. In the case of Paraguay, the production of alternative fuels did not affect food production or lead to greater impoverishment of its population. On the contrary, it was having beneficial effects on the country's economic development and improving social conditions. That was possible only provided that the country could control its very high production and transportation costs and at the same time maintain its significant position as a net provider of food to other countries and thus continue contributing effectively to food security at the global level.

26. **Mr. Cameron-Glickenhaus** (Palau) said that, for his country, sustainable development meant developing in a way that preserved its unique ecosystems, and the food and other services they provided. Ecosystems were interconnected in ways about which there was still much to learn, and they did not end at the boundaries of countries' exclusive economic zones. The high seas contained a wealth of vulnerable marine ecosystems which supported diverse species, and also provided food for tuna, the backbone of the economies of many island nations. Bottom trawling posed a major threat to those vulnerable marine ecosystems, being responsible for 95 per cent of world-wide damage to seamounts. General Assembly resolution 61/105 required States and regional fisheries management organizations to take measures to protect vulnerable marine ecosystems from bottom fishing. The South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Organization had adopted interim measures that had done much to eliminate that unsustainable practice, and Palau urged others to follow that lead.

27. Palau, the Marshall Islands and the Federated States of Micronesia had agreed to conserve 30 per cent of their near-shore marine resources, and 20 per cent of their land resources, by 2020. The project, the first of its kind in the world, covered 6.7 million square miles of ocean and would help protect 463 coral species. The countries concerned would not be able to achieve those goals without international assistance, in the form of funding and expertise, to identify vulnerable areas for conservation and to devise enforcement and protection mechanisms.

28. For Palau, climate change posed an existential threat. As the atmospheric concentration of greenhouse gases rose, temperatures increased, the seas rose, the oceans acidified and corals bleached. Thus, global warming threatened to destroy the world's coral reefs, which in the case of Palau would be tantamount to the destruction of the country. The reefs were central to Palau's economy and vital to its food security. Their destruction would lead inevitably to the migration of the people.

29. Together, the small island developing States produced less than 0.02 per cent of total global greenhouse gas emissions, but they would be among the countries most devastated by climate change. Consequently, Palau stressed the absolute need to reach an agreement on a set of quantified emission reduction targets for the post-2012 period. Those targets must reflect the urgency of the situation and must be consistent with a mitigation framework that protected the most vulnerable parties to the Convention. Atmospheric greenhouse gas concentration must be stabilized as far below 450 ppm carbon dioxide equivalent as possible. The post-2012 regime must

mitigate the impacts of climate change on small island developing States as one of the key benchmarks of its adequacy and effectiveness. The survival of Palau, and the world's ability to achieve sustainable development, were dependent upon serious global efforts being made at Bali and beyond.

30. **Mr. Al Sharji** (Kuwait) commended the cooperation and solidarity shown by the international community in its prompt response with extensive humanitarian operations to alleviate the impact of natural disasters. The United Nations and its agencies, programmes and offices had played an outstanding role.

31. Kuwait had been one of the first States to participate in disaster response by providing assistance within a bilateral framework to affected countries and regions. Over the past three years Kuwait had donated hundreds of millions of dollars to countries affected by the tsunami and by the earthquake in South Asia and to the victims of Hurricane Katrina. It had also provided hundreds of thousands of dollars in financial assistance to a number of Caribbean countries affected by Hurricane Wilma, to the Democratic Republic of Korea to help with the effects of flooding and to Pakistan to assist those affected by Typhoon Yasmin. Those sums were provided without deductions for transportation and administrative costs.

32. As natural disasters were tending to increase and caused heavy losses of life in addition to negative economic, social and environmental impacts, particularly in the developing countries, efforts should be made to respond to those disasters and contain the damage. It was also important to establish an effective regional early warning system.

33. The State of Kuwait would continue to provide aid on a bilateral and multilateral basis, both in mitigating the immediate effects of disasters and in reconstruction, either through the Government or through relief organizations such as the Kuwaiti Red Crescent and other non-governmental organizations.

34. **Mr. Tidjani** (Cameroon) said that the High-level Event on Climate Change had been a welcome demonstration of the international community's increased awareness of that phenomenon and the extent of the challenge it posed. The international community had made an unprecedented commitment to efforts to safeguard the planet for present and future generations.

35. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change had noted that Africa, the continent which caused the least pollution, could be the continent to suffer the most catastrophic consequences of climate change; it would also be the most vulnerable to its impacts because poverty limited its capacity to adapt. In Cameroon, the most significant impacts would be felt in the near future. The rise in sea level caused by flooding would threaten the mangrove, submerge the coastal areas, destroy biodiversity and displace populations and industrial property, causing very substantial financial losses. In the Sudano-Sahelian zone, the fauna in the Waza National Park was already diminishing, agricultural and husbandry output was declining and the incidence of diseases such as malaria, meningitis, typhoid, diarrhoea and cholera was rising. Further North, Lake Chad continued to shrink as a result of climate change and had already lost 90 per cent of its original surface area.

36. Cameroon had responded by ratifying the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Kyoto Protocol, and by including the relevant provisions in its sustainable development strategies. It had then defined a number of strategies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and to create and strengthen national capacities for managing the effects of climate change. In addition to the framework law on the environment, a national environment management plan had been prepared, supported by the national environment and sustainable development fund. A national biodiversity action plan and a national plan to combat desertification had also been prepared in 1999 and 2007, respectively. An observatory for climate change would soon be established.

37. In the area of energy, Cameroon had introduced sustainable management of its natural resources, was introducing technological changes and was expanding hydropower. It would be implementing a number of projects, including the construction of a gas power plant, a reservoir dam and a hydroelectric power plant.

38. In the northern and coastal areas, the Government was harmonizing adaptation and mitigation strategies to be implemented by the public and by the authorities. The private sector and civil society were actively involved in a number of projects, including the Sudanese savannah project on reforestation and environmental education in the north and far north of Cameroon. In that context, Operation Green Sahel had been relaunched through the national reforestation

programme. At the local level and in the context of decentralized cooperation, the Government was allocating forest areas to community structures as a way of directly involving local populations in the management of their forest assets. Activities relating to the use of renewable resources in the Congo Basin forest raised the issue of deforestation and the necessary balance between environmental preservation and efforts to enhance socio-economic growth.

39. Implementation of all the initiatives mentioned required significant human, technical and financial resources that were beyond the capacity of Cameroon in view of its many different priorities. His delegation welcomed the fact that the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), held in February 2007 in Nairobi, had called for an increase in aid to Africa on account of the circumstances and real needs of the region. It also appreciated the Governing Council's decision to assess new measures to reduce the risks posed to human health and the environment by mercury. As for the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, the States concerned had insufficient resources available for implementation.

40. The Bali Conference should make use of all the efforts and commitments of the international community and translate them into an agreement that took into account the legitimate concerns of the developing countries and would safeguard the global environment for present and future generations.

Agenda item 55: Implementation of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) and the strengthening of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) (A/62/8, A/62/219 and A/62/339)

41. **Ms. Fakhr-Uz-Zaman** (Pakistan), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the challenges of urbanization had never been more urgent, as by 2007 half of humanity would be living in towns and cities for the first time in history. By 2030 the proportion would increase to two thirds.

42. The number of slum-dwellers was increasing exponentially and was currently estimated at one billion in the developing world. The vast majority lacked safe housing, access to water and sanitation, a modern energy supply and waste collection and disposal services. Urbanization also brought a wide range of social, economic and environmental problems, including inappropriate consumption and production patterns. Unchecked, it was a threat to the sustainable livelihood of mankind. Urgent attention should be given to the issue of sustainable human settlements and adequate shelter for all, especially in view of the linkages with poverty, employment, transportation and the provision of basic services such as water and sanitation.

43. UN-Habitat was actively assisting Member States to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, especially in relation to target 10 on water and sanitation and target 11 on slum upgrading. UN-Habitat should be provided with the financial and technical support required to meet the growing demands for assistance at both national and regional levels. The Programme played an important role in achieving sustainable development, but unfortunately the resources allocated to it were disproportionate to the task.

44. The resource mobilization strategy of UN-Habitat had brought a steady increase in resources over the past six years. Nevertheless, the continued inequity and unpredictability of funding, in view of the imbalance in earmarked contributions as well as dependence on a small number of donors, hampered the Programme's ability to function in accordance with the national priorities of programme countries. Despite the overall increase of 10 per cent in the total voluntary contributions received by UN Habitat, which had amounted to $126.0 million in 2006, non-earmarked contributions remained at the $10 million mark. While aggressive fund-raising efforts had led to multi-year pledges totalling $57.1 million for the Water and Sanitation Trust Fund, only $20.1 million had been pledged for the Slum Upgrading Facility. Water and sanitation had to be addressed along with slum upgrading in an integrated manner, particularly at the implementation level. The thirteenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development had called for a holistic approach.

45. She commended the countries that had made multi-year pledges and reiterated the call for the international donor community and financial institutions to support UN-Habitat, its Slum Upgrading Facility and the Water and Sanitation Trust Fund with an increase in non-earmarked, predictable and timely

financial contributions. The Secretary-General should increase the regular budget of UN-Habitat, which amounted to only 10 per cent of the total contributions currently received. The Group of 77 and China would give favourable consideration to the Secretary-General's proposal in the context of the programme budget for the biennium 2008-2009.

46. Progress had been made at the twenty-first session of the Governing Council of UN-Habitat, with consensus resolutions on guidelines on decentralization and the strengthening of local authorities, guiding principles on access to basic services for all, urban youth development, women's land and property rights and access to finance, and African fund/financing mechanism on slum prevention and upgrading. The approval of the biennial work programme and budget and the efforts to strengthen the United Nations Habitat and Human Settlements Programme should facilitate the overall implementation of the Habitat Agenda. Other important developments included the Medium-term Strategic and Institutional Plan for 2008-2013 and the experimental reimbursable seeding operations for financing low-income housing and urban development.

47. An appropriate response to human settlements could also be fast-tracked by adequate capacity-building at regional and national levels, which could be done partly through sharing of experiences, common regional policy formulation and implementation within the context of the Habitat Agenda and the Millennium Development Goals. In that context, she expressed support for the ongoing ministerial meetings at the regional level on housing and urban development, which focused on mainstreaming the urban dimension of the Habitat Agenda and the related internationally agreed development goals.

48. Disasters, whether natural or man-made, considerably reduced the gains made in the area of human settlements. In view of the invaluable experience of UN-Habitat in preparedness and recovery measures, it should encourage the early involvement of human settlements experts in the assessment and development of prevention, rehabilitation and reconstruction programmes to support the efforts of developing countries affected by natural disasters and complex humanitarian emergencies, through its involvement in the Executive Committee on Humanitarian Affairs and in collaboration with the relevant United Nations agencies. The international community should also enhance the quality and quantity of ODA and organize technology transfer, capacity-building, enhanced market access and increased foreign direct investment to developing countries and assistance in solving their external debt problems.

49. It was imperative for the international community to support the implementation of the Habitat Agenda as it focused on critical aspects of human livelihoods, basic needs and poverty eradication. UN-Habitat and all development partners should play a major role in strengthening the efforts of the developing countries in key areas for slum improvement, slum prevention and urban poverty reduction.

50. **Ms. Ovcharenko** (Russian Federation) said that international cooperation on human settlements was an important component of the global agenda for sustainable development. She supported the strengthening of UN-Habitat as the key United Nations entity in that area and the implementation of the Habitat Agenda and the human settlement goals formulated in the Millennium Declaration and in the Johannesburg Implementation Plan.

51. At its twenty-first session, the UN-Habitat Governing Council had adopted an important Medium-term Strategy and Institutional Plan for 2008-2013. Her country supported the strategic direction laid out in the Plan, the creation by 2013 of the necessary conditions for stabilization of slum growth, urban poverty reduction and reversal of the rising trend in the number of slum-dwellers. The Plan would help to focus the activity of the Programme and facilitate a broadening of the financial base of the organization. One important element was the development and strengthening of UN-Habitat partnerships, especially with the Governments of interested countries at the national and local level. It was important to increase cooperation with the Bretton Woods institutions and strengthen the inter-agency coordination of UN-Habitat with UNDP, the United Nations Environment Programme, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and other organizations and institutions of the United Nations system working in related areas.

52. It was essential to enhance the quality of the management of UN-Habitat by improving monitoring and accountability, introducing mechanisms to evaluate projects implemented under the Programme and further enhancing methods for collection and analysis of

statistics on human settlements. The Programme had contributed to the discussions at the fifteenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development, especially on issues such as energy for sustainable urban development and urban air pollution.

53. Her country had doubled its contribution to the budget of UN-Habitat since 2006. A new bilateral cooperation agreement between the Russian Federation and UN-Habitat had come into force and that cooperation would be further increased and enhanced in the future. Her delegation looked forward to the visit to the Russian Federation of Ms. Tibaijuka, UN-Habitat Executive Director, to participate in the first all-Russian housing forum.

54. **Mr. Liu** Yuyin (China) said that, since the beginning of implementation of the Habitat Agenda in 1996, the international community had made concerted efforts to address human settlement and environmental issues and had achieved some results. The twenty-first session of the Governing Council of UN-Habitat had adopted the Medium-term Strategic and Institutional Plan for 2008-2013, which set out goals and visions for the future development of human settlements.

55. Problems such as housing shortages, inadequate infrastructure, lack of energy resources, deterioration of the environment and a weakened capacity to deal with disasters, remained serious challenges for many developing countries. By the end of the current year, the urban population was expected to outnumber the rural population. Urban problems such as poverty, environment, land management, water resources, sanitation and slums had become new concerns. Certain factors should be taken into account in order to expedite achievement of the twin goals set by Habitat II, namely "adequate shelter for all" and "sustainable human settlements in an urbanizing world" and to implement the Habitat Agenda in a comprehensive and effective manner.

56. Poverty could be eradicated only by economic development that created the necessary conditions for resolving human settlement problems. The international community should work to achieve economic growth, poverty eradication and reduction of the gap between the rich and the poor. Human settlement policies, plans and priorities should be realistic and appropriate to specific national situations, capacities and conditions. Different countries faced different problems and they could learn by sharing their experiences. Human settlement development should abide by the principle of sustainability. Efforts to achieve economic development, social progress and environmental protection and the work on population growth and human settlements should be coordinated. The development and improvement of human settlements and protection of the natural environment should be integrated so that sustainable development could use resources and energy efficiently. The international community should honour its financial and technical commitments in order to create favourable conditions for the developing countries to achieve economic and social development and to build their capacity for working with human settlements. Human settlement developments in the urban and rural areas were interdependent and mutually complementary. Rural human settlements remained a weak link and a serious challenge to efforts to address human settlements in the world. Rural and urban development planning should be synchronized to promote further integration of rural and urban economies in order to achieve a balanced development of human habitats in both areas.

57. All members of society should work together on human settlements and awareness campaigns should encourage participation by the general public. Models of cooperation involving various channels and partners such as local governments, NGOs, private sectors, women and youth should be explored. The Chinese Government attached great importance to the development of human settlements and had worked to fulfil the commitments made at Habitat II and at the special session of the General Assembly on human settlements. Joining with local governments, enterprises, civil-society groups and local residents, and in keeping with its people-centred concept of development, the Chinese Government had been working to support the integrated and harmonious development of rural and urban areas, of economy and society and of man and nature. It had taken strong action to improve the living standards of its people and to create a safe, healthy and comfortable living environment for them.

58. The average housing space per person in China had increased in urban and rural areas and efforts had been made to improve the living environment. There were awards to honour those cities, towns, entities and individuals that had contributed to sustainable urban development and the improvement of human habitat in

China. In October 2008, the fourth session of the World Urban Forum would be held in Nanjing, China, on the theme of harmonious urbanization.

59. **Mr. Gehlot** (India) welcomed the adoption of the Medium-term Strategic and Institutional Plan for 2008-2013 of UN-Habitat and looked forward to early implementation of the resource mobilization plans. India had always highlighted the importance of housing finance for the poor and hoped that UN-Habitat would provide longer-term finance for domestic financial institutions.

60. India had always involved local authorities in decision-making and implementation, empowering local authorities to represent all sectors of society. It had recently launched an integrated programme to promote sustainable urban development, whose objectives included the provision of seven basic services to the poor: land tenure, affordable shelter, water, sanitation, education, health services and social security. There were also a number of programmes promoting affordable housing in rural areas. The problem of housing was intricately linked to the eradication of poverty and Government policies and programmes focused particularly on improving employment in rural areas. In the framework of South-South cooperation, India had been sharing appropriate technology, particularly in the field of cost-effective, environmentally friendly and disaster-resistant construction. India had also hosted the first session of the Asia-Pacific Ministerial Conference on Housing and Urban Development in December 2006.

61. **Mr. Metalitsa** (Belarus) said that his country viewed UN-Habitat as an important partner in its efforts to improve living conditions in human settlements. Belarus was currently designing and implementing programmes for transforming small human settlements with little development capacity into agricultural and industrial villages and towns with adequate levels of housing and social and production infrastructure. The programmes included components for establishing conditions for small businesses, for the use of resource-conserving and environmentally friendly technologies in housing construction and utilities and for the upgrading of human settlements affected by the Chernobyl disaster. He invited UN-Habitat to consider the provision of technical assistance to Belarus for the design and implementation of those programmes.

62. **Ms. Halliyade** (Sri Lanka) said that the rapid expansion of cities had created severe challenges for many developing countries endeavouring to achieve sustainable development in the field of human settlements. Already, 30 per cent of the world's urban population lived in slums, with their numbers rising rapidly. Achievement of the Habitat II twin goals was therefore urgent.

63. The Millennium Development Goals included the time-bound targets of improving the lives of at least 100 million slum-dwellers and providing access to safe drinking water. His Government was committed to the attainment of those targets and had launched a number of programmes designed to upgrade a total of 1.3 million housing units. State-financed housing programmes paid particular attention to the needs of inhabitants of underserved settlements, with provision for infrastructure and environmental facilities as well as housing. The Government had also launched a programme for the construction of new houses in each underserved village, accompanied by livelihood development programmes. The Government's poverty reduction strategy set great store by the provision of affordable quality housing for specific groups among the poorest, including plantation workers, fishing communities and communities displaced by disasters.

64. The Urban Settlements Improvement Programme helped the population of underserved urban settlements to improve their social and environmental infrastructures under the leadership of the community-based organizations in each settlement and with the guidance and support of central and local Government authorities and NGOs. The programme focused on the commitments set forth in the Habitat Agenda and the Millennium Development Goals and, in particular, on slum upgrading, access to drinking water and sanitation, security of tenure and integrating gender perspectives in plans and policies.

65. With donor assistance, the Government was also conducting a number of water-supply and sanitation projects and, with UN-Habitat support, had prepared a 10-year Development Framework Programme covering all major sectors. Sri Lanka stood ready to enhance its cooperation with other countries in the field of human settlements development.

66. **Mr. Teshome** (Ethiopia) said that, unless substantial investments were made in housing and urban development over the next two decades, the

urban population in the developing world would be permanently ensnared in the urban poverty trap, aggravated by poor housing, sanitation and health, deficient nutrition and low productivity. Africa's share of the world's urban population was expected to rise to 17 per cent by 2015, owing partly to rural-urban migration, caused by declining agricultural productivity and lack of employment opportunities and physical and social infrastructure, and partly to natural population increase.

67. Ethiopia, with an urban population of 13 million, was experiencing all the problems associated with rapid urbanization. In response, the Government had enacted an Urban Development Policy designed to provide efficient public services, complement rural development, promote job-creating economic opportunities and stimulate participatory democracy. In addition, the National Five-Year Plan had been expanded to incorporate urban development and urban good governance programmes. Housing, schools, libraries, youth centres and sports facilities were being constructed, while the good governance aspect of the Policy focused on land and infrastructure management, financial management, development planning, organizational and human resources development, public participation and justice reform. Ethiopia had benefited from the Cities without Slums initiative and hoped that UN-Habitat would partner the Government in the task of improving the living conditions of the country's millions of slum-dwellers.

68. The Habitat Agenda called for enhanced cooperation, technology transfers, and exchanges of knowledge and experience designed to attain the goals of shelter for all and sustainable urbanization. In that context, Ethiopia called on the international community to contribute to the Water and Sanitation Trust Fund, the Slum Upgrading Facility and the Technical Cooperation Trust Fund so as to enable UN-Habitat to help the developing countries provide adequate shelter and basic services.

69. **Mr. Tharyat** (Indonesia) said that the Habitat Agenda had not made slums disappear; rather, with economic progress and the expansion of cities, they had continued to grow. Globalization had deepened and accelerated the urbanization process, often with negative consequences. The world's homeless now totalled over 100 million, posing a major social development challenge. Many steps had been taken to implement the Agenda but a great deal remained to be done, including sustained funding and improved mainstreaming of its goals into development processes. Success would depend on the availability of adequate, reliable funding and on sensitization of financial institutions and other creditors, including philanthropic entities, to the issues. Governments must in turn pledge budgetary allocations to ensure implementation of the Agenda, so that the poor could enjoy access to financial resources.

70. The use of resources must be tied to operational strategies that facilitated implementation of the Agenda, and recent landmark decisions taken at the twenty-first session of the UN-Habitat Governing Council would doubtless prove critical in that regard. UN-Habitat's role must be aligned with recipient countries' specific housing needs and it should therefore work with Governments on framing appropriate policies and strategies for resolving the problems of unregulated urbanization, focusing on implementing national housing projects rather than promoting its own. At the regional level, UN-Habitat should build effective national and local partnerships and establish a regional information network to facilitate the sharing of experiences and best practices. The Programme's Regional Office should be a catalyst for national action and a forum for discussion of urban improvement strategies, while the Millennium Development Goals should serve as indicators for results-based evaluation throughout the region. While commending UN-Habitat on its contributions to countries affected by natural disasters, his delegation enjoined it to redouble its efforts in that regard.

71. **Ms. Armanni-Sequi** (International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)) said that the Federation addressed the issue of adequate shelter for all primarily in the context of disasters, especially those involving climate change. At its forthcoming International Conference, IFRC would address the consequences of environmental hazards, including climate change, and would build opportunities for Government partnership with the Federation.

72. The provision of emergency shelter during natural disasters had required measures to increase IFRC shelter capacity and to support the wider shelter sector. IFRC had collaborative arrangements with UNHCR, UN-Habitat and other United Nations agencies, NGOs, and research institutions in order to promote greater global preparedness and predictability.

73. IFRC also supported existing and new shelter agency networks, research institutions and donors, as well as key collaborative initiatives to promote the sector. Steps had recently been taken to enhance the humanitarian and commercial sectors' involvement and to capitalize on potential financial and technical resources. IFRC enhanced national preparedness planning to include identification of shelter-sector assistance from humanitarian actors as part of State disaster-response operations, and convened emergency shelter clusters in a number of developing countries, also providing tools, basic materials and information on building techniques. The challenge of ensuring adequate shelter for all, even beyond the disaster context, was universally acknowledged. Urbanization must be addressed holistically, and the forthcoming World Urban Forum to be held in China would test Governments' political will. Where social violence was concerned, partnerships must be established with young people for the design and implementations of programmes involving them. IFRC would also like to share the results of its collaboration with other United Nations offices and agencies regarding the migrations that had so largely contributed to urbanization.

Agenda item 56: Globalization and interdependence (A/C.2/62/2)

(a) Globalization and interdependence (A/62/71-E/2007/46, A/62/216 and A/62/303)

(b) Science and technology (A/62/136)

(c) Preventing and combating corrupt practices and transfer of assets of illicit origin and returning such assets, in particular to the countries of origin, consistent with the United Nations Convention against Corruption (A/62/85, A/62/116 and CAC/COSP/2006/12)

74. **Mr. Seth** (Director, Office for ECOSOC Support and Coordination), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on the impact of international commitments, policies and processes on the scope and implementation of national development strategies (A/62/303), said that globalization evoked hopes and fears alike, with many countries benefiting from it while others suffered from its negative consequences. Yet everyone could benefit if the challenge of ensuring equitable sharing of its burdens and blessings were addressed.

75. The focus of the report under consideration was the impact of external factors on domestic policymaking capacity. The report suggested ways of tailoring policies to changing domestic and external circumstances, of supporting developing countries' capacities to anticipate the implications of macroeconomic and trade policies, and of enhancing developing countries' institutional capacity fully to understand the implications of international obligations and processes and of enabling them to participate actively in global decision-making. All that clearly required the assistance of the international community and the United Nations system.

76. He urged the Committee to provide clear guidance regarding the focus of the report that the Secretary-General would submit to the sixty-fourth session of the General Assembly with a view to its adoption of an action-oriented resolution that would help to illuminate a part of a complicated canvas. The Secretariat was ready to provide the required assistance.

77. **Ms. Tran-Nguyen** (Director, Division for Services Infrastructure for Development and Trade Efficiency, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 20/205 concerning science and technology for development (A/62/136), said that advances in science and technology in areas crucial to human well-being had produced marked increases in productivity and per capita income in many countries and were central to achieving most of the Millennium Development Goals. With a view to building solid capabilities in science, technology and innovation, Governments of developing countries were investing more resources in development programmes targeting those capabilities and turning to international and regional organizations for policy and programme advice. The organizations were in turn seeking to improve their institutional capacity to respond. However, countries that lacked the skills and infrastructure to join the knowledge economy or failed to invest in building such capacity would fall far behind. Policymakers in the developing world must address that issue.

78. At its tenth session the Commission on Science and Technology for Development had taken steps to mobilize the participation of all stakeholders, including NGOs and business entities. As the focal point for the

United Nations system-wide follow-up to the World Summit on the Information Society, in May 2007 the Commission had adopted a multi-year work programme that would support the Commission in that effort and its work related to paragraph 60 of the 2005 World Summit Outcome. The work programme would also allow the Commission to maintain its unique role as a global forum for the examination of science and technology questions.

79. The Secretary-General's report highlighted some of the work of UNCTAD on science and technology. Science, technology and innovation policy reviews were designed to help developing countries identify policies and measures to integrate science and technology into their national development strategies and serve as effective tools for meeting the Millennium Development Goals. Reviews were being finalized for Angola and Mauritania and were being initiated for Mauritius and Ghana. In Africa the reviews were carried out in collaboration with the Office of Science and Technology of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), the World Bank, the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

80. "Connect Africa", a partnership established in 2004 in cooperation with the Swiss Centre de Technologies de l'Information (Information Technologies Centre), provided training on information and communication technologies to engineers, technicians and teachers in the least developed countries of Africa.

81. One of the sub-themes of UNCTAD XII, "Enhancing the enabling environment at all levels to strengthen productive capacity, trade and investment: Mobilizing resources and harnessing knowledge for development", would address policy areas that must be tackled in order to enable more developing countries to benefit from the globalization of knowledge and technology.

82. **Mr. Vlassis** (Chief, Crime Conventions Section, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on preventing and combating corrupt practices and transfer of assets of illicit origin and returning such assets to the countries of origin (A/62/116), and the report of the Conference of the States Parties to the United Nations Convention against Corruption (CAC/COSP/2006/12), said that there had been significant developments with respect to the fight against corruption since the Secretary-General's report had been finalized. The United Nations Convention against Corruption continued to enjoy strong political commitment from Member States, as demonstrated by the fact there were currently 103 States parties and 140 signatories.

83. The Conference of the States Parties to the Convention against Corruption had an ambitious work programme, proving its ability to cope with its comprehensive mandate and reach important political decisions. At its first session, held in December 2006, the Conference had stressed the importance of review of implementation of the Convention and the crucial role of information to be provided by States on the subject. Thus far 45 States had transmitted such information by means of the self-assessment checklist selected by the Conference as an information-gathering tool. A number of countries, especially developing and least developed countries, had used a software package designed to facilitate the process. The checklist would serve as the basis for consideration of the full-fledged review mechanism at the second session, to be held in January 2008 in Indonesia. The UNODC secretariat was testing various implementation review methods in a voluntary pilot programme involving 16 countries from all regions and would report its findings at that session.

84. The Open-ended Intergovernmental Working Group on Technical Assistance of the Conference and the international cooperation workshop on technical assistance for the implementation of the United Nations Convention against Corruption which UNODC had convened in June 2007 had agreed that the Convention should be incorporated in the relevant development assistance programmes and be an integral part of overall governance programmes. The Working Group had also recommended the preparation of a comprehensive overview of technical assistance needs and resources, which should be made available to the Conference to assist it in its role as coordinator and facilitator of such assistance.

85. In August 2007, the Open-ended Intergovernmental Working Group on Asset Recovery had recommended the development of practical tools for asset recovery, including a database for legislation and judicial decisions, further analysis of legal and regulatory frameworks and a handbook. The Group had

also highlighted the importance of close cooperation between relevant agencies and the responsibility of the financial sector and had recommended the establishment of a global network of focal points for asset recovery, which should meet annually. UNODC worked closely with the Asian Development Bank, the Basel Institute on Governance and the World Bank to align and coordinate relevant initiatives.

86. Following the launch in September 2007 by UNODC and the World Bank of the Stolen Asset Recovery (StAR) initiative, the two partners had continued to shape the joint work programme and define the objectives and structure of the initiative. The StAR initiative would focus on capacity-building, inter alia by helping developing countries to strengthen their prosecuting 'agencies and bring their laws into compliance with the Convention. It would also work to bring financial centres into compliance with anti-money-laundering legislation and regulations, strengthen the capacity of and enhance cooperation between financial intelligence units around the world, and explore innovative forms of short-term technical assistance for complex large-scale proceedings, with an emphasis on capacity-building. The Friends of StAR, an advisory group of experienced and influential individuals from developed and developing countries, would guide the initiative and advocate for the implementation of the asset recovery provisions of the Convention and for cooperation between countries.

87. Political momentum with respect to the Convention was very strong and the outcome of the work of the working groups to which he had referred gave cause for optimism that the Conference of the Parties would make tangible progress regarding its implementation at its second session. The General Assembly should strongly urge Member States to adopt decisions at that session by consensus and to do their utmost to implement the Convention.

88. **Mr. Diarra** (Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States) said that despite the commitments to the least developed countries made in the United Nations Millennium Declaration, in the Brussels Declaration and the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010, at the high-level meeting on the midterm comprehensive global review of the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries and at the Ministerial Conference of Least Developed Countries on the theme "Making globalization work for least developed countries", those countries remained marginalized from the mainstream development process and failed fully to benefit from globalization owing to the inherent constraints of their economies, weak competitiveness and discriminatory multilateral rules and policies governing trade, investment, finance, migration and labour.

89. In 2005 the least developed countries had accounted for almost 12 per cent of the world's population but had accounted for only 0.69 per cent of global output. He provided statistics demonstrating that the share of the least developed countries in world trade had barely improved over the years because of tariff barriers and the fact that they were unable to make significant use of arrangements under the Generalized System of Preferences, owing largely to supply-side constraints, stringent rules of origin affecting clothing and sanitary and phytosanitary standards applied to food products.

90. Although South-South trade currently accounted for 40 per cent of developing country exports and 11 per cent of world trade and had provided an opportunity to increase export earnings, many least developed countries had failed to benefit from such trade owing in large measure to market entry barriers of developing countries. Moreover, lack of progress in multilateral trade negotiations could lead to the further proliferation of regional trade agreements, of which there were already a considerable number in the South, thereby creating a "spaghetti bowl" of rules of origin and discriminatory trade taxes.

91. FDI inflows to the least developed countries had increased dramatically since 1990 but were concentrated mainly in the oil and mining industries and in only a few countries. Attracting FDI was very difficult for many of the least developed countries owing to their fragile political systems, weak regulatory and legal framework, weak institutions, poor infrastructure, weak human capital assets and relatively undeveloped private sector and local markets.

92. ODA, still the major source of external finance for the least developed countries, had almost doubled since 1990 but had remained at only 0.08 per cent of donors' GNI, the same level as in 2003 and below that of 1990. Furthermore, the share of ODA dedicated to

economic infrastructure and productive sectors had declined by almost one half.

93. Migrant worker remittances constituted the second largest source of financial flows to the least developed countries. Remarkably, since 1990 South-South remittances to least developed countries had exceeded North-South remittances, owing primarily to proximity and community ties with large developing countries such as India, South Africa and Saudi Arabia. The United States of America remained the largest single source of remittances to least developed countries and significant remittances flowed to them from the European Union area. However, migration from the least developed countries often resulted in a significant loss of skilled workers.

94. The achievement of the ambitious goals and targets for reducing poverty and hunger in the least developed countries established in the Millennium Development Goals and the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010 were in serious jeopardy. Sustained globalization called for greater international support for the world's poorest nations, particularly to help them build productive capacity and physical infrastructure, foster technological learning and innovation and mainstream trade into their development strategies. Inclusive globalization called for increased voice and participation for the poorest countries in multilateral forums and open, equitable, rule-based, predictable and non-discriminatory multilateral financial, monetary and trading systems. Sustained and inclusive globalization required broader policy space for those countries and greater ownership by them of their national development.

95. **Ms. Fakhr-uz-Zaman** (Pakistan), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that many developing countries, especially the least developed among them, remained marginalized in the rapidly globalizing world economy. Consequently, the benefits of globalization were unevenly shared and its costs were unevenly distributed.

96. Developing countries must have the policy space crucial for devising the national policies and strategies to achieve sustainable development, for which each country bore the primary responsibility. National efforts should be supported by an enabling international environment and developing countries must be assured greater voice and participation in international economic decision-making and norm-setting. There was therefore an urgent need for continuing efforts to reform the international financial architecture, including the Bretton Woods institutions.

97. The United Nations should play a fundamental role in the promotion of international cooperation for development and in ensuring coherence, coordination and implementation of development goals and actions agreed upon by the international community. To that end, coordination within the United Nations system must be strengthened, in close cooperation with all multilateral financial, trade and development institutions. The United Nations system could help identify best practices and tools to help strengthen developing countries' institutional capacity effectively to cope with the implications of external macroeconomic and trade policies for their development strategies.

98. With regard to science and technology for development, restraints on access to technology, in particular advanced technologies that could facilitate progress in such areas as agriculture, health, energy, trade, water and environmental protection, were a major problem for developing countries. Building on the decisions adopted at the 2005 World Summit and the World Summit on the Information Society, restrictions on technology transfer and acquisition should be revised. Incentives should be provided for research, including by the private sector, on the problems of the poor, which currently attracted only 10 per cent of research and development expenditure.

99. As to the question of preventing and combating corrupt practices and transfer of assets of illicit origin and returning such assets to the countries of origin, the Group of 77 and China invited the States parties to the United Nations Convention against Corruption to implement the decisions adopted at the inaugural session of the Conference of the Parties, particularly the initiatives on asset recovery and the provision of technical assistance and support for capacity-building. Developing and developed countries alike should seek creative ways to cooperate on asset recovery issues, and he looked forward to progress in that regard at the second session of the Conference of the Parties.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.